



Archives

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WILKINSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER VOLUME 28, ISSUE 3

Wilkinsburg honors those who served in Korea and Vietnam.



Wilkinsburg's Korea and Vietnam monument is situated at the corner of Ross Avenue and Hay Street adjacent to the Borough building. It was built and dedicated July 28, 1984 by members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion. At the time it was believed to be the first of its kind in Allegheny County, honoring those who served in Korea and Vietnam. This granite monument stands 6'4" tall and frames the flagpole which was given by the Wilkinsburg Elks Lodge No. 577. The flagpole and the Borough building were both dedicated January 1, 1940 when the Borough building was first opened.

The gray granite monument honors those who served in the Korean War (1950 to 1953) and the Vietnam War (primarily 1960s). The black granite piece is engraved with the words: DEDICATED IN GRATEFUL MEMORY TO THOSE WHO WENT FORTH FROM THIS COMMUNITY TO SERVE THEIR NATION WITH HONOR IN TIME OF WAR

Some of those brave men and women who served never returned home. The casualties of war affected American families, including many in Wilkinsburg.

A few months ago the Wilkinsburg Historical Society was given a few different copies of The Annual, the High School yearbook. They were owned by William Stanley Master, a 1962 graduate of WHS. Classmates signed their names and teased about Bill's sports prowess, girlfriend, common classes...and wishing him lots of luck and a bright future, His future seemed bright, he married his high school girlfriend and joined the Army. Corporal William Stanley Master served with Battery B, 2nd Battalion Aerial Rocket Artillery (ARA), 20th Artillery Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division.

On February 7, 1967 William Master was killed in Binh Dinh, Vietnam at age twenty-two.

The Progress Feb. 15 1967

Mortar Fire Kills Wlkbkg. GI In Vietnam

EAST SUBURBS — Memorial services for PFC. William S. Master who was killed in Vietnam Feb. 7, were held Sunday at South Avenue Methodist Church in Wilkinsburg where a little more than a year ago he was married to a Churchill Borough girl, the former Karen Conte.


Funeral arrangements by the Maurice L. Knee Funeral Home, Wilkinsburg, await final word from the Army.

MASTER, WHOSE first child is expected in June, was hit by mortar fire fragments as he lay sleeping in his tent early in the morning, according to Defense Department reports.

A radio operator, he had been in the service since a few months following his wedding in September of 1965 and in Vietnam only three months where he was attached to the 3rd Air Cavalry. He and his wife had kept in touch regularly by sending taped messages back and forth.

YOUNGEST OF the three

(Please Turn to Page 2)



PFC. WILLIAM MASTER

sons of Mr. and Mrs. Norbert J. Master of Wilkinsburg, he was graduated from Wilkinsburg High School, as was his wife. He later completed a course at the Pittsburgh Triangle School of Drafting and was employed at Connell Engineering in his hometown before entering the Army.

Master's father is a mathematics instructor at Wilkinsburg High School and his brother, Joseph J. Master of Eastmont, teaches math at Penn Hills Senior High. Another brother, Thomas, resides in Steubenville, Ohio. He is also survived by a niece.

MRS. MASTER, the daughter of Mrs. Valentine Conte and the late Valentine Conte, is on the staff at the Mother Goose Nursery School and Kindergarten. An accredited nursery school teacher, she is a graduate of Harcum Junior College in Philadelphia.

VIETNAM VETERANS
MEMORIAL FUND
FOUNDED BY THE WALL

THE WALL OF FACES

VIEW ALL PHOTOS (3)

HONORED ON PANEL 15E, LINE 6 OF THE WALL

**WILLIAM STANLEY
MASTER**

WALL NAME
WILLIAM S MASTER

PANEL / LINE
15E/6

DATE OF BIRTH
07/05/1944

CASUALTY PROVINCE
BINH DINH

DATE OF CASUALTY
02/07/1967

HOME OF RECORD
PITTSBURGH

COUNTY OF RECORD
Allegheny County

STATE
PA

BRANCH OF SERVICE
ARMY

RANK
CPL

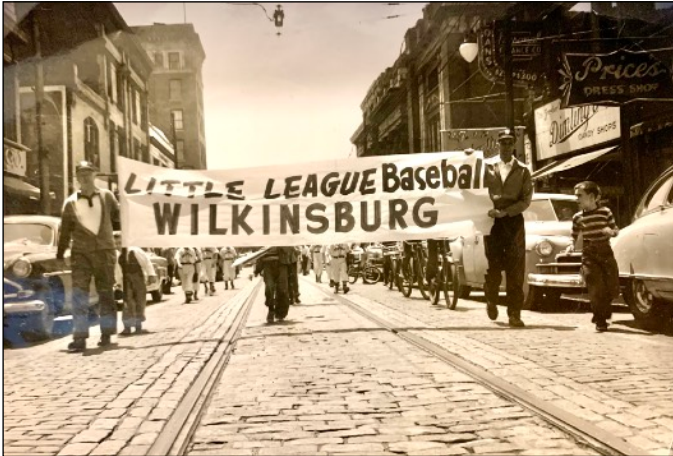
William Master is listed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund online memorial. Some of his WHS classmates have posted memories of past activities they shared. Stories of youth group, playing music in the High School band, dancing in the church gym, hay rides in the fall, basketball throughout the winter, selling Christmas trees at the church.

One friend wrote: "He deserved a longer time on this earth but I believe he lived his short 22 years to the fullest. Rest in peace Bill, and God Bless".

William Stanley Master was an American hero, and he has not been forgotten.

On Memorial Day all of those who made the ultimate sacrifice should be remembered too.

Wilkinsburg Little League Baseball - circa 1950s



Springtime is traditionally the start of baseball season all over America. For Wilkinsburg residents that meant the beginning of Little League, Pony and Colt baseball teams. The baseball season began with a parade down Wood Street and Penn Avenue, continuing on to Turner Field for an opening ceremony. In the left image above, baseball coaches carry the Little League banner down Wood Street, leading the parade. In this image the tall Shields building and part of the G.C. Murphy store can be seen on the left side of the street. The right side of the banner shows Mellon Bank (later Citizen's), Rowland Theatre, Dimlings Candy and Price's dress shop.

The right image above shows the opening ceremony for the season. After a few words from the Wilkinsburg Chief of Police, Pledge of Allegiance, and words of encouragement from league coaches, the ceremonial first pitch was made.

The teams were patterned after Major League baseball, with National League and American League divisions. Team names included Braves, Yanks, Phils, Browns, Pirates, Indians, Tigers, Senators, Athletics, Cubs, Giants, Dodgers, White Sox and Cardinals. Players used Whitney Field, Turner Field and Graham Field for their games.



Left image shows a 1950s era Wilkinsburg Yanks team. Right image above shows 2021 Wilkinsburg Baseball Association teams parading down Penn Avenue. Their T-shirts honored #42 Jackie Robinson, America's first African-American Major League player. Wilkinsburg baseball has now joined with Homewood and Lincoln to form the East Side Baseball. About 75 kids are involved with T-ball, and teams for ages 8, 10 and 12. Usually the games are held at Whitney Field. The dedicated coaches are working hard to grow the program.

Making Bronze Move - Exploring the work of Pittsburgh sculptor Susan Wagner



The left image above was taken July 24, 2021 moments after artist Susan Wagner unveiled her newest public sculpture, Abraham Lincoln. Commissioned by the Wilkesburg Historical Society, a crowd was present for the unveiling. The right image shows the pensive Lincoln, as he stood with the Emancipation Proclamation rolled in his left hand.

From WQED: *Making Bronze Move - Exploring the work of Pittsburgh sculptor Susan Wagner* At home and abroad, Susan Wagner's bronze sculptures and colorful paintings capture the spirit and likenesses of famous athletes, saints, soldiers - even a President and a pioneering surgeon. This WQED documentary short examines Wagner's Western Pennsylvania work, including statues of Roberto Clemente, Willie Stargell, Bill Mazeroski, Abraham Lincoln and Thomas Starzl as well as colorful paintings of endangered animals.

Here is the link to view the documentary: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J5bEPreOYB8>

From the Wilkesburg Historical Society: *Making Bronze Move* is a wonderful new 10 minute documentary that WQED has produced about the amazing artworks that Wagner has created in Western Pennsylvania. WQED's producer Nathalie Berry, along with photographer/editor Paul Ruggieri, photographer Dave Forstate and narrator Anna Singer recently created a documentary about the beautiful bronze statues that artist Susan Wagner has sculpted, and much insight into the persona of Wagner, the artist.

When the Historical Society needed to retire the century-old copper Lincoln statue and move it into the Borough building, the members main request was to replace it with a bronze "Wagner" in Wilkesburg. Thanks to the generosity of people connected to Wilkesburg, funds were raised and Susan Wagner accepted the commission. The fascinating YouTube documentary includes Wilkesburg's Lincoln statue in the array of featured artworks by Susan Wagner.

“The Church, The Toolbox, and The Heritage”

When you call the plumber to your house, he or she arrives with a toolbox which the plumber hopes carries all the tools needed to be successful. Yet, the toolbox is not considered to be a tool! or is it?

The churches in every community make up our common patrimony of our religious architectural heritage. They are ours to use for our success. Each of these now historic religious structures was built to help us achieve multiple purposes and to have multiple effects on our neighborhoods. Each church building is a toolbox. It seems important to remember that each structure had a unique architect and a group of Founders who designed its every nook and cranny. The Founders and architect built well, so the building would give a message through the architecture of the shelter and for a long time without spending additional money on the structure.



These sacred shelters erected lifetimes ago employed the researchers and best craftsmen of their generation. Many highly skilled artisans were brought together to create something unique in the neighborhood, and they were highly paid, or not paid at all, to create a large beautiful “tool box” of a building. This unique shelter was to be the place for the owners to unite their energies to help each other and their community. The Founders and architects creative talents trespass through the generations in the mortar, in the sculpture, in the woodwork, in the stone carving, in the layout of the rooms, in the designs of the windows and of the pews, in the shape of a steeple, in the bell, in the tower. All of this investment and purpose can be renewed or lost in our lifetime.

When historical changes cause the owners of the building to be reduced in number, the remaining owners are the only ones who usually care about their church. Some owners worry about the toolbox and neglect having an assortment of tools (ministries) in the building! Some owners use all their talents for ministry and forget to keep their building in repair, as if it is not their largest and most expensive “tool”. They are in denial. The aging of the structure requires that the owners adjust their balance from not worrying about building maintenance to restoring almost everything about the building as it ages. This is a task that no congregation has been trained for, especially congregations which are much smaller than when they were at their highest attendance level. So their big decisions often are between paying the heating and the electric bills. There is no money left to repoint the leaking masonry, replace the uneven sidewalks, improve the efficiency of the heating plans, or insulating. This task of restoration of the building seems unreligious, and yet is essentially very religious.

From studies recently, we learn that people who live near historic religious architecture create more stable neighborhoods and they enjoy seeing the unique architecture of the church in their community. Neighbors who are not members of the church often feel that it is a good thing to have the church people there, but they do not feel welcomed to use their talents, time and treasure in that congregation. Yet the neighborhood people are beneficiaries of the struggling congregation’s efforts to stop the crumbling of the aging religious edifice.

One wrong approach that some dioceses have had is to sell their old churches on the cheap to small independent religious congregations, who cannot afford the heating bills and restoring the building. They leave the building in worse shape in a few years. That is not an

answer. What is needed is a new vision - and both the congregation and the neighbors have a right to a new vision if it is a solution. Often it is up to the owners of the building to invite the neighbors to use their talents to help without asking neighbors to adopt their religion. Restoring the historic structure is a common cause. Putting heads together in creative thinking, the owners of historic religious architecture and community helpers can adapt and find alternative uses that help to pay for restoration for the building.

One of the blessings of our existing religious architecture is that the churches are evenly spaced throughout the community and as part of the community have relationships with their nearest neighbors. They can work together to make their neighborhood the best it can be by using the large “tool” of the religious structure as the neighborhood center for meetings, children, organizing and many other multiple uses that seem to be more like tenants than ministries.

There is a place, Twin Oaks, in Louisa County Virginia where a person’s work is exchanged for all the families medical, food, clothing, shelter, educational needs and no one is on the public dole. Each person’s talents are developed and individuals may learn new talents. Most people manage something for the community! It is based upon the small novel by B. Skinner called *Walden II*. If that can be done there, it can be done anywhere and one wonders if a congregation should teach how to work, trading talents for fulfillment of needs. Could a church become a center for teaching how to identify and use one’s unique talents, to invest time in teaching positive thinking, and how to work as a team on neighborhood initiatives.. all the while restoring their historic building. The phrase “Think globally and act locally” needs a structure in which to work.

Some owners of religious architecture are using their space heritage for multi-purposes which bring to the building new partners and new sources of regular infusions of money. When a small congregation or a diocese which is attempting to manage the demise of many small congregations, has patiently done “church” the same way with no results, something new is needed. “If you keep doing the same thing, you will keep getting the same results!” It is time to bring in new partners and new money and not close the building and leave the neighborhood. This opening to new and creative ideas continues the original mission of the Founders and the architect in many wonderful ways that end the corporate depression of small churches and give them hope. The following from Psalm 87 reflects how good things are centered in God’s house!

Founded by God this holy mountain. The Lord loves the gates of Zion, through which pilgrims from all nations pass, more than all the houses of Israel. Of you are told glorious things, O City of God. Here is one new born; the singers and musicians cry out in chorus. All my sources of life and joy are in you.

The writer is Jack Schmitt, a Wilkinsburg Historical Society member who grew up on Elm Street in Wilkinsburg. He has a Master’s Degree in Counseling, and was a teacher in various public schools. He has volunteered with Preservation Pittsburgh since 1994. Additionally, Jack founded the Allegheny Historic Preservation Society to restore Calvary United Methodist Church in Pittsburgh’s North Side.

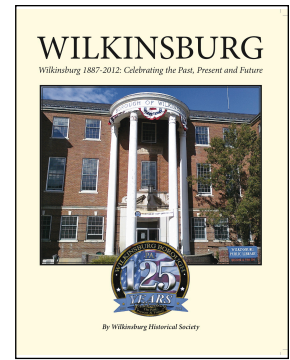
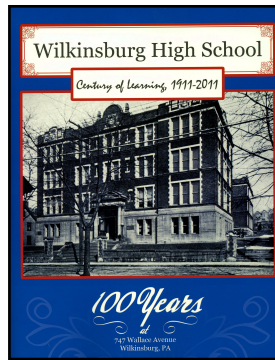
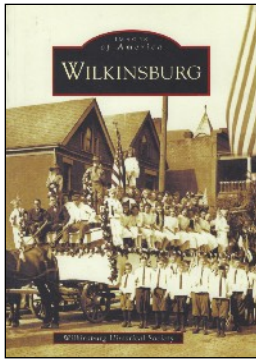
Wilkinsburg has always been known as the City of Churches. There are nearly 30 historic churches that still have congregations and services. In every forthcoming issue of the Archives, the concerns of congregations will be discussed. The irreplaceable Religious Architectural Heritage of the church community is worth preserving. Stay tuned!



This image of the Mellon Bank (later Citizen's Bank) at 901 Wood Street was taken about 1978. The empty lot next door dates this image after the Rowland Theatre was demolished in 1976. The April 2022 issue of the Archives newsletter featured the history of this bank building. The story triggered memories from several people who wrote to share their childhood recollections. These delightful stories are reprinted for Archive readership to read and enjoy. Hopefully other readers will be inspired to write and share their memories of places and events that happened so very long ago in Wilkesburg.

One recollection came from Win Bryson, an Archive reader from the west coast. Win writes, "I never actually went into the bank - as a kid all that marble made it look foreboding - like kids weren't supposed to go in there. Entering the building from the street and turning right there was a tiny, echo-ey elevator lobby with marble wainscot and a tiny rickety open-cage elevator. Steep-narrow stairs, iron with marble treads(?) wound around it to the 2nd floor as I recall. Instead of flat landings at the stair turns, I think I recall there were stair steps on a radius from the inside corner, long prohibited by code. Through the 1950s our family dentist Dr. Kidd had his office on the 2nd floor. Mum would make an appointment for us three kids to go there every six months for the preventative and dental care she and her generation of kids never had. And I'd try every way I could think of to miss those appointments - tops of my shoes were worn out foot-dragging! By high school we kids made our own appointments since by then, we all had widely differing schedules, but were pretty good about being regular. However, my candy-eating 5th and 6th grades had gotten me lots of painful days in the chair...slow learner. And I don't think Dr. Kidd believed in Novocaine.

Win's sister Doris had her own memories of time spent in the Wilkesburg Bank building. Doris wrote, "Thanks for the Great Blast from the Past. I always thought that Bank building really "owned" Wilkesburg. I remember the alcove or aisle hall with the elevator. I think it had one of those metal "kiddie gate" closures. Trips to the dentist there were real ordeals for me, most of the time. So much so, I remember writing a poem about Dr. Kidd for 9th grade English class. Mum liked the Dr. and his wife a lot, so I was really stuck. I did like the windows in Dr. Kidd's office. I think they were nearly floor to ceiling, and he would light up a cigarette and look out the window while he was waiting for fillings to set."



These are the three books that the **Wilkinsburg Historical Society** wrote and published during the past twelve years. They help to promote and preserve the history of Wilkinsburg and raise funds for the various projects of the Society. All three books are still available to purchase from the Society. Another way to support the activities of the Historical Society.

On the far left is ***“Images of America - Wilkinsburg”***, a 128 page soft-bound book printed by the Arcadia Publishing Company. It includes over 220 black and white photos depicting the history of our town from the early land patents in the late 1700s up to the 75th celebration of Wilkinsburg in 1962. The book is available from the Wilkinsburg Historical Society for \$20.00, plus \$3.00 for shipping.

The middle book above is ***“Wilkinsburg High School - Century of Learning 1911-2011”***. This book chronicles the history of the local high school from its early start in the late 1880s, the creation of the magnificent structure in 1910, and each decade since with highlights of the events that were important in the lives of the students and the Wilkinsburg community. For over 100 years the Wilkinsburg High School served the Borough of Wilkinsburg students and this book has several hundred photos showing much of this important history. This *Century of Learning* book is available from the Wilkinsburg Historical Society for \$15.00, plus \$3.00 for shipping.

The book on the far right is ***“Wilkinsburg - 1887-2012, Celebrating the Past, Present and Future”***. This book was produced by the Historical Society in 2012 to recognize the 125th anniversary of Wilkinsburg’s incorporation as a Borough. This soft-bound book has 196 pages and includes chapters on the history of Wilkinsburg, the celebrations from the past, information about Wilkinsburg’s government, and all the events that occurred during the 125th celebration. There are several chapters about the clubs and organizations in Wilkinsburg as well as the churches and worship centers in the Borough. The “future of Wilkinsburg” section recognizes advertisers and sponsors who helped to fund the creation and printing of the book. This book, originally \$15.00, is now available for \$10.00, plus \$3.00 for shipping.

Make check or money order payable to: **Wilkinsburg Historical Society**

Orders can be mailed to: Wilkinsburg Historical Society, P.O.Box 17252, Pittsburgh, PA 15235

Images of America - Wilkinsburg (\$20.00 + \$3.00) = \$23.00 Quantity_____ Total _____

Century of Learning 1911-2011 (\$15.00 + \$3.00) = \$18.00 Quantity_____ Total _____

Wilkinsburg 1887-2012 (\$10.00 + \$3.00) = \$13.00 Quantity_____ Total _____

Name_____ Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip _____



Don't miss out on **The Wilkinsburg Sun**, a free monthly community newsletter published by the volunteer Wilkinsburg Community Newsletter Board, with the support of the Wilkinsburg Borough, the Wilkinsburg School District, the Wilkinsburg Chamber of Commerce and the Wilkinsburg Community Development Corporation. The Sun accepts submitted articles provided they are related to Wilkinsburg and are civic-minded.

<https://wilkinsburgsun.wordpress.com>

Sign up to receive The Sun by email at:

<http://eepurl.com/v0iBP> and friend The Sun on Facebook.

Wilkinsburg Historical Society has a website, to share more information about the history of Wilkinsburg. wilkinsburghistory.wordpress.com

Mailing address: **Wilkinsburg Historical Society, P.O. Box 17252, Pittsburgh, PA 15235**

The "Archives" Historical Society newsletter is published monthly, March through November.

We do not publish the Archives during the three Winter months of December, January and February.

Wilkinsburg Historical Society yearly dues for the Wilkinsburg Historical Society are:

\$20.00 INDIVIDUAL Member, \$35.00 FAMILY Membership

\$10.00 STUDENT or ASSOCIATE Members Please keep your membership dues up to date.

Wilkinsburg Historical Society - Membership application

Help promote the valuable history of Wilkinsburg.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

E-mail address _____

☐ \$20 Individual membership

☐ \$35 Family membership

☐ \$10 Student or associate membership

☐ \$_____ Additional donation

Please make check payable to: **Wilkinsburg Historical Society**

PO Box 17252, Pittsburgh, PA 15235

Anytime is a good time to pay your dues for the Wilkinsburg Historical Society. We have many preservation projects going on, and providing displays for Wilkinsburg events. Many thanks to those of you who have already sent in your membership dues. Please use the address on the form, our PO box.